

Columbia County Ad Hoc Shooting Range Committee
April 23, 2014
Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 P.M

Attendance

Casey Krueger – Regional Warden SCR, Mike Green – Warden Supervisor, Eric Lobner – SCR Wildlife supervisor, Mark Aquino – Regional Director DNR, Eric Lobner – Regional Wildlife Supervisor DNR, Keith Warnke – Hunting and Shooting Sports Coordinator DNR, Jim Watson- Columbia County Sporting Alliance, Richard Swenson – Conservation Congress Columbia County, Clark Cupery - Columbia County Economic Development Committee Rep, James Foley – Columbia Count Board Rep, Debra Byars – Town of Dekorra Board of Supervisors, Becki Tomlinson – Town of Lowville Board member. Absent: Tim Ashley

At this meeting the committee was charged with choosing their top recommendation for a Columbia County public shooting range from the two remaining sites: Dekorra and Mud Lake. Recommendation from this committee will go to DNR where the administration will decide whether to proceed and which direction to take. If the DNR decides to proceed, they will go to NRB for an amendment to the Columbia County property master plan. If the NRB approves, range engineering and construction can begin.

Public Comments:

Bob Garsky – no comment

Dennis Annen – Would like to see range at Mud Lake. Central location. Would like 200 yd range. Will volunteer to help with maintenance and upkeep.

George Ferreter – Commend committee for their work. Advocate for Mud Lake location. Central, will serve larger area better than Dekorra.

Dave Hinkel – Lives in Dekorra. Doesn't think sound mitigation will work. Concerned his home value will decline.

Larry Hahn – Wants place to shoot. Believes there is already noise at Dekorra. Does not support Mud Lake location. Favors Dekorra because it's already noisy there.

George Ferreter again – Encourages enforcement of no shooting rules and supports restricting shooting on other DNR properties when a range is built.

Sound Testing:

A trial was conducted at Dekorra to evaluate sound of shooting in the surrounding area. We will conduct strategic testing at both sites once the decibel meters are available. That information will be used as baseline for mitigating noise concerns and evaluating the success.

Examples at ranges:

Keith Warnke gave an overview slide presentation of many different techniques for improving safety and sound mitigation including range rules, berms, backstops, covered shooting sheds, enclosed shooting sheds, no-blue-sky design, baffles and bullet catches.

Range footprint around 4-5 acres

Committee Materials: Casey Krueger distributed survey results and comments received from the online survey. Committee members' questions were answered. In general, the survey results showed a strong preference for the Mud Lake site.

Range Discussion:

- The committee again discussed the remaining six potential sites weighing the pros and cons of each to narrow the list down.
- Eric Lobner displayed maps and discussed pros and cons.
- Discussed the archeological hits and ramifications.
- Discussed endangered species hits and the needed mitigation techniques.
- Questions on the natural area at Mud Lake were addressed

Site Selection:

Lowville town board is concerned with road maintenance and damage from increased vehicle travel that would result if a range were built at Mud Lake.

The committee supported the Mud Lake site for range development by a 5-1 margin.

Other Comments:

The committee supported adding Columbia County to the list of counties where shooting on state lands is prohibited unless at an established target range or while hunting.

There was a recommendation from the committee for the state to provide support to the Town of Lowville to maintain King Rd.

Range Specification Recommendations from the Committee:

- 200 yard range
- Enclosed shooting sheds
- Side berms
- Minimum 24 foot backstops
- Bullet catches
- Noise mitigation techniques
- No-blue-sky shooting stations

- Paper targets only
- Overhead safety/sound baffles
- Fenced perimeter
- Signage
- 20+ car parking area

Follow up:

Next steps are to brief the DNR administration and they will decide how to proceed.

Many thanks were extended to the entire committee for their time and commitment to this important process.

Adjourned at 7:50